



November 2024

Soil and Water Resources Management (SWRM) Grants

- Requests to transfer cost share funds between counties are due to DATCP by December 1, 2024.
- Many of the SWRM forms have been updated with new content and new numbers. Please refer to [Section 3 of the SWRM Grant Resources](#) webpage to access these forms. **We will be switching to using only these forms in 2025.**

ATCP 50 Update

- ATCP 50 updates went into effect on June 1, 2024. Final rule language can be reviewed on the Wisconsin Legislature's [website](#). The Bureau has information on its [website](#) about the updates. If you have any questions, email datcplandwater@wisconsin.gov.
- **NEW PRACTICE INTRODUCTION:** Conservation Cover (ATCP 50.663). This SEG-funded conservation practice allows for the establishment and maintenance of permanent vegetative cover in an agricultural setting to reduce erosion, improve water quality, and better soil health. Available for lands covered with a nutrient management plan. It requires the county to commit to 10-year minimum planning and monitoring period for this practice. SWRM cost-share will cover the initial installation and the creation of the monitoring plan.
- **This fall, DATCP is hosting ATCP 50 Office Hours** related to non-structural practice updates. Each Office Hour will include a technical primer of the practice, a short discussion of the soil health benefits, and applicable SWRM cost-share requirements. Please send question ahead of time to DATCPLandWater@wisconsin.gov or join to ask questions during the session. All [Office Hours](#) are planned to be recorded and available for future viewing [here](#).

Nitrogen Optimization Pilot Program (NOPP)

- Cycle 3 of the NOPP grants are now open through January 17, 2025. Please visit <https://nop.wi.gov> for application materials or more information. The NOPP team will host [office hours](#) to discuss the application each Monday from 9:30-10:00 am through January 13, 2025. All research plans must be pre-approved by Monica Schauer, the UW research director for NOPP. Email your ideas to her at mschauer2@wisc.edu for approval by December 1. The full application being due January 31, 2025.

Nutrient Management News

- We have restocked **Runoff Risk Advisory keychains and magnets!** Please reach out to datcpsoilandwatershedmanagement@wisconsin.gov to request magnets and or keychains. When reaching out, please include how many of each you would like, as well as an address to mail them to.
- **Second annual Nutrient Management Regional Meetings: Thank you to everyone who was able to attend. We truly appreciate the participation and feedback!** During the webinar session, we recorded Cody Calkins' DATCP Nutrient Management Update presentation and the SnapPlus V3 Demo. Both are now available for viewing here:
 - SnapPlus V3: <https://wisconsinlandwater.org/members-hub/on-demand-training/nm-snapplusv3-demo-2024>
 - DATCP NM Update: <https://wisconsinlandwater.org/members-hub/on-demand-training/nm-swrmand-nutrient-management-updates-2024>
- Nutrient Management Farmer Education classes are beginning to be scheduled. Please email datcpsoilandwatershedmanagement@wisconsin.gov to request a DATCP NM staff to assist with your training. Please let us know the dates, timeline, and what you would like us to present on.
- [2025 Virtual Nutrient Management Training for Farmers](#) - This training provides both the basics of nutrient management and an introduction to SnapPlus. The same training will be offered on two dates. Participants only need to attend one training date to be certified as an eligible farmer plan writer.
 - Dates: January 10 and March 14. Times: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
 - [Register here](#)
- We have a **new NMFE brochure** that can be found here: <https://datcp.wi.gov/Documents2/NMFEBrochure.pdf> and a **new Nutrient Management Brochure** that can be found here: <https://datcp.wi.gov/Documents2/2024NMBrochureWeb.pdf>.
- Previous SnapPlus trainings can be found here: [Nutrient Management Trainings](#).
- Counties that would like some assistance on Nutrient Management Quality Assurance Reviews should email Cody Calkins at cody.calkins@wisconsin.gov. We are looking at providing assistance this year to at least three counties.
- The 2024 Annual NM Reporting Survey is due November 15.

Land and Water Conservation Board-LWRM Plans

- At the December 3, 2024 LWCB meeting Langlade, Vilas, and Wood counties will be presenting LWRM plan revisions to the board.
- The next meeting of the LWCB Advisory Committee on Research will be January 7, 2025 at 9:00 a.m.

Conservation Engineering

- Engineering staff updates:
 - Justin White recently left DATCP and is now the SE Area Engineer for NRCS.
 - Jon Lisowe has joined DATCP as the SE Area Environmental Specialist. He will be the primary contact for the SE Area until we can backfill Justin's position, which we are currently working on. Watch for a job posting soon!
 - The posting for the DATCP SE Area Engineer will be a dual posting in an effort to hire a second engineer to fulfill the DATCP/NRCS project position of a Hydrologic & Hydraulic Engineer or Ag Engineer – Advanced.

DATCP Drainage Program

- DATCP is in the process of updating the Drainage Program website. In an effort to provide the most accurate and up-to-date information, DATCP is requesting that all counties with active drainage districts provide contact information for each drainage board member. Please send the following information to Barton T. Chapman, P.E., Drainage Program Manager, at Barton.Chapman@Wisconsin.gov.
 - Name, title (i.e. Chairperson, Secretary, Member, Attorney, etc.), address, phone number, email address, and year of appointment
- The Wisconsin Association of Drainage Boards (WADB) will be holding their annual meeting on November 19, 2024 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Portage Best Western.
- All activities within drainage districts are managed and administered by a County Drainage Board. Contact information can be found on the Drainage Program website [here](#) or by contacting Barton T. Chapman, Drainage Program Manager, at Barton.Chapman@Wisconsin.gov.

Cover Crop Insurance Rebate Program

- The [application](#) closed until December 2024. To qualify, cover crops must be planted in the fall of 2024 on fields to be cropped in spring of 2025. The acres cannot receive cover crop funding support during this same time. Please retain your FSA-578 for the application process.

Farmland Preservation (FP) Program and Agricultural Enterprise Areas (AEA)

- FP Program staff from DATCP and DOR will be hosting a webinar for county staff to discuss the farmland preservation tax credit. The presentation will cover updates to the tax credits, different forms used by claimants, what to do if a landowner receives a notice from DOR, and what happens to the DOR Participant Spreadsheet after it is submitted. Pre-registration is required. To register click the following link: [Farmland Preservation Tax Credit Updates with DOR](#). This meeting will be recorded.
- Any new farmland preservation agreement applications must be turned in by November 15, 2024 to be guaranteed to be processed for tax year 2024. FP staff will continue to process all applications submitted after that date, but we cannot guarantee that it will be processed and eligible for tax year 2024. The application can be found at the following webpage: [Farmland Preservation Agreement Application](#). Completed application packets can be sent to datcpworkinglands@wisconsin.gov.
- For information about the AEA petition process, including application materials, visit the [Petitioning for AEA Designation webpage](#). Please contact Wednesday Coye at wednesday.coye@wisconsin.gov with any questions you have about the AEA program.
- The [DATCP Home Farmland Preservation Tax Credits](#) webpage has been updated with additional information to help landowners and tax preparers choose the correct tax schedule when filing for an FP tax credit. If you receive any questions from landowners or tax preparers regarding questions related to tax credit claims or tax credit denials, please contact Wednesday Coye at wednesday.coye@wisconsin.gov. Landowners who have received a denial letter have a limited amount of time to file an appeal with Department of Revenue; timely action is critical.

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

- County CREP Annual In-Kind Cost Reporting: Counties are asked to report their CREP administrative costs to DATCP by no later than December 6, 2024. The county contributions to administer CREP count toward Wisconsin's overall match requirements for federal CREP funds and are important for meeting statewide CREP program requirements reported to FSA by the end of the year. The reporting form ([LWR-282](#)) is on the CREP website. Completed reports should be sent as a pdf via email to Brian Loeffelholz at Brian.Loeffelholz@wisconsin.gov.

- DATCP CREP Agreement Submittal Deadline is November 8, 2024. FSA accepted new CREP enrollment offers up to September 30, 2024 for federal fiscal year 2024 (Sign up 61). Please contact your local FSA office to see if there are any pending CREP CRP1s that still need the state/county CREP agreement (LWR-283) completed. Friday, November 8, 2024 is the deadline to submit the completed CREP state/county agreement to DATCP to ensure state payment by December 31, 2024 for the 2024 tax year.

Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grant (PLWPG) Program

- 2025 was the most competitive year yet for the Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grant. We received applications from **49 producer-led groups**, for a total funding request of over **\$1.6 million**. With a program budget of \$1 million, the grants review committee had to make extremely difficult decisions. Priorities were to fund new viable groups while also providing the highest level of funding merited to as many existing groups as possible.

All grant proposals were subjected to a thorough review process by a team of internal and external reviewers. Projects were scored and selected based on the review criteria listed in the 2025 Request for Proposals. High scoring proposals from new groups included projects occurring in parts of the state currently lacking in farmer-led conservation leadership, as well as a strong workplan clearly linked to group goals with an emphasis on group development. Strong proposals from existing groups included demonstrated effort to strategically plan and develop sustainable farmer-led organizations, a comprehensive plan for gaining farmer and community participation in conservation efforts, and inclusion of diverse conservation practice offerings.

Soil Health Program

- Soil is the vital living ecosystem that sustains plants, animals, and humans. Soil health is about restoring that capacity to provide five crucial soil system functions: regulating water, sustaining plant and animal life, cycling nutrients, providing physical stability and support, and filtering and buffering potential pollutants. Healthy soil systems are created by incorporating the five soil health principles: maximize soil cover (think cover crops and no-till), maximize living roots in the soil (think cover crops, diversifying crop rotation, perennial crops), maximize crop/plant diversity (think cover crops, diversifying crop rotation, perennial crops), integrate livestock (managed grazing, proper manure management), and minimize soil disturbance (no-till, reducing chemical fertilizer, reducing pesticides, i.e. nutrient management).

Soils can be broken down to their three primary properties – chemical, physical, and biological. Soil health recognizes that soil biology drives most of the soil functions in a soil system. Incorporating the five soil health principles creates the environment for soil biology to thrive. (in a gram [~1 teaspoon], there are about 7-11 billion organisms). Soil health has proven to be a great motivator for our producer-led groups, helping to reach new farmers. DATCP hopes to build a common understanding of what soil health is, to facilitate statewide coordination on soil health topics and initiatives, and to provide support to conservation partners and farmers in transitioning to a soil health system.

- The new online Soil Health curriculum is now live and available on our soilhealthtraining.wi.gov website. The purpose of this curriculum is to develop a common definition and understanding of Soil Health and develop some guideposts of how to implement soil health systems on Wisconsin farms. Modules 1-3 establish a common language of soil health in Wisconsin agriculture. Module 4 focuses on applying soil health in Wisconsin cropping systems. The curriculum incorporates both traditional and citizen science to demonstrate the mindset necessary to be successful as a soil health farmer. The primary audiences are LCD staff, other Agriculture Professionals in Wisconsin, and Wisconsin farmers. For questions regarding this training or the soil health program contact Randy Zogbaum at randal11.zogbaum@wisconsin.gov.

- **Upcoming Soil Health Trainings** - Soil health is the systems thinking approach to agriculture implemented by incorporation of the five Soil Health principles as described on [DATCP's Soil Health webpage](#). The revised version of ATCP 50 has incorporated several practices to give counties new tools to address the five Soil Health principles. Each of the ATCP 50 New Practice Office Hours trainings provide an overview of the Soil Health systems thinking approach and how the practice meets the soil health principles, with the final training session in the series (**November 12**) focusing on soil health.

Legislation Updates

- The 2023-2024 Legislative Session ended in mid-March.